# THE HILL CREST

IT was the evening of the last day of December. James Winslow and old Dr. Carter, his minister for forty years, sat together, watching the old year out. They had grown old together, these two. Seventy winters had sifted their snow upon their heads simultaneously. There was that deep understanding between them which is not afraid of a lull in the conversation.

Finally James Winslow stirred and spoke. "Well, William," he said, "another year is about gone, and they're getting fewer for us both. When the blood thins out and the years draw in, it isn't so easy to see the old year die, is it? I wonder if it's part of the declining courage of old age that makes me increasingly afraid to look at the past."

"You are in good company, James," replied the doctor, "when you want to forget the past. You remember Paul said, 'Forgetting those things which are behind.' Paul evidently found no profit in regretful reveries. I think he was right when he refused to be an antiquarian, digging up the fossils of dead faults. No nourishment is gained by chewing on that little quid. It seems to me that if a man has lived a fairly decent life memory ought to act as it does when a man gets home from a journey abroad. It should leave out the inconveniences, the irritations and the fatigues of the journey, and treasure up the images of purple seas, sunny skies, vine-clad hills and ancient cities. Memory ought to yield us something like that from the pilgrimage of the soul. It ought to remind us of the providential guidance that has kept us in the way, the grace that has softened and sanctified our tribulations. Paul would be the last man to shut himself up in the damp mausoleum of souvenirs and regrets."

"But it strikes me," said the other, "that we ought not to have to fight shy of memory for fear it will break our courage. It ought to have something positive to offer us."

"You're in good company again there, James, for Moses says, 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.' I think he is not strictly at variance with Paul. Moses believes that to-day's courage should be fed on yesterday's memory. He sees that yesterday and to-day are carved out of the same eternity, and one cannot be explained or understood without the other. It was memory that fed David's courage when he went out to fight Goliath: 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' We all leave our lion slain, like David and Samson. We all leave our token of God's love in the year that will drive to its close to-night. And we ought to say with Samuel:

'Here I'll raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thy help I'm come,
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.'

"I suspect, too, James, that Moses saw some of his crosses transfigured as he stood on Nebo at the end of the trail and looked back from that vantage point. We are always looking for a revelation of God in the future. I wonder if the newest and best revelation is not just to pause at the crest of the hill and look back over the way God has led us in the past. I'm not much disturbed over the failures. I simply try to keep to the road, and let Him take care of the rest.

'For this is life: to love the light,
To see the best, to ask for all,
To seek a city out of sight,
In spite of failure and of fall.'"

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